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HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Letter dated 28 July 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I have the honour to write to you with regard to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/226 of 3 April 1997, in particular section III.B, paragraph 26.

The objectives and intent of the Group of 77 and China when it joined the consensus in that resolution remain unchanged, hence its support to the decision taken by the Fifth Committee at its meetings held on 21 and 22 May 1997 which reaffirmed that the resolution would be implemented as adopted.

The Group of 77 and China also endorsed the understanding that the resolution would not be implemented in a retroactive manner, as conveyed by the President of the General Assembly in a letter dated 30 May 1997 addressed to you contained in document A/51/913.

It was officially recognized by the Main Committee of the General Assembly dealing with human resources management issues that staff holding short-term appointments before 3 April were not subject to the provisions of paragraph 26 of resolution 51/226. In the view of our Group, this understanding applies without exception to all the staff of the Secretariat.

Consequently, we are concerned about information brought to our attention which indicates that the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management issued instructions to heads of various departments regarding the application of paragraph 26, which do not take into account the understanding of the Fifth Committee regarding its prospective application.

We have also learned that staff holding short-term and/or fixed-term appointments have been asked to leave the Organization by the end of this month,

ostensibly in pursuance of the aforementioned paragraph. We would like to know under which provisions of the staff or financial rules have the Secretariat interpreted the use of the term "short-term appointments ... of one year or more" as stated in the resolution, to encompass "fixed-term appointments of less than one year".

In the view of the Group of 77 and China, such instructions, if issued, constitute a serious departure from the decisions of the General Assembly and should be rectified immediately.

I have the honour to request the following details regarding resolution 51/226:

(a) Mode of application of paragraph 26 of the aforementioned resolution;

(b) Number and nationality of staff on short-term appointments before 3 April 1997;

(c) Number and nationality of staff that have been asked to leave the Organization pursuant to the implementation of the aforementioned resolution;

(d) Number and nationality of staff on short-term appointments recruited after the adoption of the resolution;

(e) Number and nationality of staff exempted from the application of paragraph 26, the reasons for such exemptions and the name of the department where he/she works.

In this context, the Group of 77 and China considers that it would be pertinent that in its reply the Secretariat take due account of the questions asked by various delegations during the formal meetings of the Fifth Committee held on 21 and 22 May 1997.

Finally, I wish to reiterate the commitment of the Group to work towards an open and constructive dialogue with the Secretariat for the greater efficiency of the Organization, particularly in the field of human resources management.

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to request that this letter be circulated as an official document of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly under agenda item 120.

I await your official response with the information requested in this letter.

(Signed) Daudi N. MWAKAWAGO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the United
Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations
Chairman of the Group of 77

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